

first for the future. I prefer to think that the latter has happened, that reason has triumphed over instinct. Many of your readers will remember the case of the broken legged stray dog who was treated in a London hospital (between twenty and thirty years ago, I think) and who subsequent to his discharge therefrom reappeared one day at the hospital with a broken legged canine friend. The incident gave rise to considerable discussion and correspondence at the time under the head of "Reason or Instinct."

As regards Mr. Dewar's experience with his Babbler, undoubtedly the birds did not reason correctly, but that they attempted to reason seems to me no more unlikely than that Darwin's historical retriever did. Had the Babbler been actuated only by instinct it surely would have gone on feeding its young, the primary instinct of all creation to its progeny. I am only endeavouring to give a possible explanation of the bird's behaviour and have no intention of dogmatising. The train of thought may have been something like this,— "Here's an intruder! Better wait a bit and give him time to go on, before I expose the whereabouts of the nest. I might try a little scolding too; it is so successful with mongooses, snakes, and other avian annoyances. He does not seem to mind the scolding, and shows no disposition to move on, and I simply cannot let the children starve, so I'll risk it." Up to this point it appears to me that reason is a *possible* explanation. That the subsequent action betokened a fault in the logic of the bird does not actually disprove the previous attempts to reason. The babblers may have put down Mr. Dewar's merciful restoration of their fledgling to "funk" induced by their threatenings and scoldings, and have flattered themselves that a pursuance of their former successful tactics was all that was required to save their young!

I am not suggesting all this so much with the view of attacking Mr. Dewar's theories, as with the idea of defending my own. His may be the most likely explanation, but it is not the only possible one. I had only wavered between instinct and reason; he has introduced a third explanation which might almost be termed hysteria.

ARUNDEL BEGBIE.

February 1909.

MAJOR.

NO. XVIII.—EXTENSION OF THE HABITAT OF THE COMMON KUKRI SNAKE (*SIMOTES ARNENSIS*.)

Through the courtesy of Major H. A. F. Magrath I have recently examined two specimens—one adult, one very young—of *Simotes arnensis* from Bannu on the North-West Frontier. Though this species is fairly common in the Plains of Peninsular India up to the low foot hills of the Himalayas, it has only once been reported outside the Oriental Region, a specimen from Deesa being in the British Museum. Although it has never been reported from the Basin of the Indus it must occur there, since it is now known to extend to the North-West Frontier, this locality very largely increasing its previously known range

of distribution. Both specimens conform to variety A of Boulenger's Catalogue, *i.e.*, have the belly unspotted. The ground colour is biscuit or buff, and there are the usual narrow blackish-brown crossbars dorsally breaking up more or less laterally. The adult is a ♀ measuring 1 foot $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches, the tail accounting for $2\frac{1}{8}$ inches. The ventrals are 194 ?, the anal divided and the subcaudals 45. The scales are, as is usual in this species, 17 anteriorly and in midbody, 15 at a point two heads-lengths before the anus. The supralabials are abnormal, *viz.*, 6 with the 3rd and 4th touching the eye but the last shield is fairly obviously a fusion of the normal 6th and 7th. There are 42 bars on the body and 12 on the tail. The three dark chevrons on the head are very conspicuous, well defined, and quite discrete.

The young specimen, which I have sent to the British Museum, is similar except that the ventrals and subcaudals number $199 + 48$, the supralabials are 7 and the crossbars $39 + 12$. The length is $6\frac{3}{4}$ inches.

F. WALL, C.M.Z.S.,

MAJOR, I.M.S.

ALMORA, 11th May 1909.

NO. XIX.—DISCOVERY OF A SECOND SPECIMEN OF THE RARE SNAKE *OLIGODON ELLIOTTI*.

Among the specimens identified as *Oligodon subgriseus* in our Society's collection which have been recently sent me I have discovered one of *Oligodon ellioti*. As only one other specimen of this rare snake is known, *viz.*, the type from the Madras Presidency which is in the British Museum, the discovery is an interesting one beside being a valuable one in the interests of our Society. The specimen accords well with Gunther's (Rept. Brit. Ind., p. 207., and Plate XIX, fig. G) description and figure. The only things to remark upon being that the second chevron on the head does not become confluent with the nuchal one. It extends bowed forwards beneath the chin however as in the type. There are 34 spots along the body. The ventrals and subcaudals are 149 and 31 and the anal shield is divided. It measures 1 foot $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches, the tail accounting for $1\frac{1}{8}$ inches. The locality given with this snake is Ceylon, but there is no record when it was received or by whom it was presented.

F. WALL, C.M.Z.S.,

MAJOR, I.M.S.

ALMORA, 13th April 1909.

NO. XX.—A CASE OF HORNET POISONING.

In Vol. XVIII of this journal (p. 694) Captain MacWatters reports three cases of hornet stings. In this connection the following case will be interesting. On the 10th December Major H. whilst out shooting was attacked by hornets.* Being unable to rid himself of them he lay down with his arms round his head

* In spite of repeated efforts I have failed to get a specimen for identification.